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# DE News

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June 22, 2001 - Iowa Department of Education - Ted Stilwill, Director

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## Top 10 Teacher Compensation Questions

### **Is the new compensation plan optional?**

Yes. For the first two years, until July 1, 2003, districts have the option to participate in the new compensation plan. The plan becomes mandatory after July 1, 2003.

During this transition time, districts also may choose the level at which they will participate. For instance, they may choose to 1) incorporate only the mentoring and induction elements, or 2) choose to incorporate mentoring, induction, and the career paths and salaries, or 3) apply for a team-based variable pay pilot; or 4) not participate at all for now. The four options are outlined on the Department of Education (DE) website at [www.state.ia.us/educate](http://www.state.ia.us/educate).

### **Do districts have to make their choices by a certain deadline?**

Districts must notify the DE if they plan to participate in any portion of the new compensation plan.

**August 15 or November 1** are the deadlines for the DE to receive applications for the mentoring and induction (Option 1) programs.

**November 1** is the deadline for the DE to receive applications for the career path (Option 2) portions.

**September 1** is the deadline for the DE to receive applications for the team-based variable pay (Option 3) portion.

Program criteria and applications are being developed now and will be available on the DE website. The application for Option 1 is already available on the website. Deadlines and application schedules also will be posted on the site.

### **The law establishes four career levels, but only the first two levels are activated at this time. Why?**

The entire career path concept will take several years to fully implement. Phasing in the career paths will provide the time needed to establish model evaluation criteria, evaluator approval programs, statewide professional development networks, and adequate transition time for districts.

The first two levels, Beginning and Career, are activated immediately with minimum salaries stipulated by statute for participating districts.

### **So when will veteran teachers get their raises?**

Many, if not most, veteran teachers in participating districts are eligible for raises right away, along with beginning teachers. Of the \$31.2 million in salary money, \$18 million is targeted specifically for veteran teachers statewide. However, because there are more veteran teachers, each may get a smaller portion, depending on how the districts choose to disburse their allocated funds. In some districts with historically low salaries, raises for Beginning teachers may consume all of the district's allocation for the first year.

**What about team-based variable pay? When and how will that work?**

We are developing criteria to implement pilots for team-based variable pay this fall. We plan to pilot that portion to gain insight and feedback on how to successfully implement it statewide.

We expect to pilot four to seven districts in this program. Interested districts can get application information from our website.

**What happens to a district's allocation if it chooses not to participate?**

Each district's allocation is held in reserve until July 1, 2003.

**Can districts determine the salary increases, or do they have to follow the disbursement set out in the statute?**

Local bargaining units have until July 15, 2001, to agree on disbursement or to establish a timeline by which the agreement will be reached. A local school board must approve such an agreement before July 15. If an agreement is not reached, then it is expected that the funds remaining after the district has distributed the funds for movement toward the minimums established for the Beginning teacher and the Career teacher will be distributed equally.

**How will districts receive their money?**

The disbursement schedule (ie, monthly, quarterly or annual payments to districts) is still being developed.

**Will this whole program continue to receive state funding?**

That is the plan. Like all of our funding, this is allocated on an annual basis so there are no guarantees. But policymakers and the Governor and Lt. Governor continue to support teacher compensation as a high priority.

**Where can districts or teachers go to for help or to ask questions?**

The first stop is the DE website at [state.ia.us/educate](http://state.ia.us/educate). Select Teacher Compensation, which is highlighted in green on the lefthand menu. You'll get a variety of information, including a policy summary, allocation tables and frequently asked questions and answers. To submit a question, just select the FAQ link and follow the instructions.